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Chief, Headquarters Training, **EYES ONLY**  
Operations School

Chief Instructor, Information Reporting,  
Reports and Requirements

Reactions to a "Critique of the IRRR course with  
suggestions for changes"

1. This memorandum is an attempt to put into useable form my reactions to a report attached to a memorandum dated 19 March 1958, addressed to chief, RQM/RC, titled "Critique of IRRR Course with suggestions for changes," and prepared by [REDACTED]

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2. The report is a report only by statement of Mr. [REDACTED] evidently it is not an objective product of objective and detailed observation. It is rather the highly subjective reactions of an individual from the point of view of the individual's particular interests and training. The result is inevitably generalization without supporting evidence. This unscientific procedure is especially noticeable in I Strengths of the course. For instance, such statements as "The course is smoothly run" are meaningless as reporting, especially in the present tense. Mr. [REDACTED] knows only about the one class that he attended, not about the operation of the course as an abstraction. Where he does restrict his judgment to the one class that he observed and says that "students' questions were answered well" /editorial italics/, what does he mean by "well"? That is to apply a general formula where no general formula ever can be realistic. The inescapable result is the expression of a personal and unsupported opinion, frowned on as unscientific even in the social sciences. Similarly what information value is contained in Mr. [REDACTED] "The quality of lecturing is good"? What is good lecturing? There is considerable question even about the existence of a good lecture in education and training. An attempt to supply some general evidence in Mr. [REDACTED] next statement is disastrous. "Mr. [REDACTED] is a particularly good lecturer: he presents his thoughts clearly, his speech is fluent and grammatical . . . ." Again there is no reality in a flat statement that anyone is a good lecturer

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and presents his thoughts clearly. He may be an effective lecturer under certain circumstances where it is appropriate to present his thoughts clearly. And there are circumstances, and no doubt were during Mr. [REDACTED] period of observation, in which fluency is destructive of effectiveness. Certainly no effective speaker is fastidiously and faultlessly grammatical in his talking, even if he could be. Speakers most successful in communicating with their audiences are those that deliberately indulge in low-level colloquialisms and slang to get on rapport. To write in a supposedly objective report that a lecturer is particularly good because he speaks fluently and grammatically is to write opinionated nonsense.

3. Moving on to Mr. [REDACTED] treatment of II. Weaknesses of the course, I find the same weaknesses there that I found in I. Strengths. To make my point I shall touch on weaknesses 9 and 10. "9. The reading periods were of little value. [REDACTED] and the 'Cable Manual' are too detailed to use as texts during reading periods." Perhaps in the schedule the reading periods should have been labeled study periods. During a life of experience in education, this is the first time I have seen a teaching handbook criticized as "too detailed." If a student is not to learn what officially is required of him by reading regulations and guides prepared for his use, how is he going to get started on proper practices? Earlier Mr. [REDACTED] rules out lecturing on this basic material because it puts the course into "low gear." Later Mr. [REDACTED] suggests that "reports procedures are most quickly and successfully mastered by on-the-job training at the Desk." A properly directed on-the-job start is attempted in the laboratory part of the IRRR course during the third week, a week that Mr. [REDACTED] again later, recommends eliminating. At the desk, reports officers too often not only have not read but do not know the existence of basic manuals and regulations. Lack of proper direction in the preparation of reports on the desk is what is perpetuating many of the bad practices in reporting, as Mr. [REDACTED] should know. It might also be well to point out that the manuals referred to are only a small part of the reading material in students kits. Finally reading periods were first set up and later lengthened by student demand.

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self-critical. Rather than being critical of his material, though, he is everlastingly skeptical of it. There is a great difference in the attitudes involved. Every "concept" and "attitude" that Mr. [REDACTED] lists is emphasized in the course.

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(1) I get bored with myself on the repetition of who, what, when, where, how, and sometimes why as needed in every report.

(2) As the only means of satisfying the customer, the entire staff never lets students forget that the tailored assignment must be developed from the customer's requirement for the guidance of the reporter.

(3) Instructors and visiting talkers try to show students how evaluations built on the presence or absence of information and intelligence values in reports help in the development of reporters. Training is given in the intelligence officer's writing down such values and calling the reporter's attention to the lack of them.

(4) During the course, there is scarcely an hour, certainly not a day, goes by without a plea for greater speed in handling information throughout the entire reporting action.

(5) Improvement of reporting and its techniques runs constantly through the course and is the prime reason for the laboratory work.

d. Pitch. The staff deliberately tries to avoid pitching the course "at a high intellectual level." The attempt is made to keep it on the productive level. Personally I hope that in teaching reporting of any kind I never fall for the temptation to play intellectual games for the sake of playing them. In terms of useful and timely products they are a more dangerous and wasteful gamble than operations for operations sake.

#### e. Instructional Techniques

(1) Problems are presented and should continue to be presented from the usefulness point of view as based on accepted official practices. Again we are not concerned with "historical perspective" but with getting a job done better.

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(2) The staff emphasizes weaknesses and faults in agency procedures and products to the point of belaboring such matters as adequate sourcing.

(3) To use no abbreviating is not acceptable reporting practice. After the first spelling out of phrasing, initials may be used. Students have in their kits lists of approved abbreviations.

(4) In the course, use is made of occasional exhibits. The best illustration, naturally, is doing the job. Certainly the student capable of attaining Mr. [REDACTED] "high intellectual level" does not need a picture book.

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f. Content of course [sic]

(1) "Our role as the servant of the customer" [not effective reportorial phrasing, since we presumably are not playing parts] is now being treated in the course from the point of view of the customer's helping direct reporting activities. In a mere "role as the servant of the customer," we should not be in a position "to drive home the importance of our reporting."

(2) Instructors take the positive approach by first showing the student how to do the CS report according to regulations, with the reasoning behind the regulations when such reasoning is evident. Only after the student has actually produced his own reports is the critical attitude assumed. As part of his production he is required to comment in detail on the strengths and weaknesses of the raw report or the field report on which he has been working. Finally his entire product is subjected to detailed criticism by an assigned instructor.

(3) The actual reporting jobs, from getting an assignment, through collection of information, to writing the final report, have been increased in number. They have the importance of reality. Again "intellectual interest" is not the aim. One lesson a reporter must learn first of all: he does his assignment regardless of its importance from his point of view or its intellectual interest. Once more, his interest is in doing a good job. Intellectual interest is an almost perfect example of the academic, contemplative, dissertation attitude as opposed to the go-get-it reportorial one.

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(4) Experience has taught the staff that mere reference to the GPO style manual means that it stays on the shelf and collects dust. Emphasis by talk about the manual's usefulness and by demonstrations of how to use it is the only way of getting it used. And surely trying to get across [redacted] idea of freeing reports officers so that they can develop into intelligence officers is worth an hour of talk by an instructor.

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(5) The handling of rumors, so far as the reporter is concerned, is simply their recognition as such and their evaluation as symptoms. Talk about the difference between fact as established by competent observation and hearsay or rumor runs through all of the instruction and the briefing in the collection of information. More discussion of field distribution could be included in [redacted] lecture on reproduction, dissemination, and exchange. The whole communications problem is really one of translating. Detailed consideration of translation from one language to another is far beyond the practicable scope of a three-weeks reporting course. As part of the communications difficulty, such translation is given consideration. All students are instructed in and given practice with third-agency information. In the matter of mixing operational information and information of possible intelligence, instructors devote part of every talk on reporting to the need of supplying each but of keeping the two separate. In all the reporting that the student carries out, he gets practice in so organizing his material that mixture of the two, as well as failure to report either, is almost impossible.

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(6) The IRRR course is limited to information reporting in its technical sense and includes operational reporting as needed for sound judgment of information values. The approach to the whole subject, however, is that reporting is reporting no matter to what particular use in what particular form the product is put.

(7) If laboratory work on routine live reports is omitted, as Mr. [redacted] recommends, just how is the staff to know whether the case officer can act as his own reports officer and put information into its finished form in the field? For the ten-thousandth time, nobody, even the crew-cut, ivy-covered Ph. D. in the JOT, can learn to do this job except by doing it and demonstrating that he will be able to continue doing it in acceptable final shape. He can learn why by being entertained and so interested, but he will never learn how. Even his dissertation he learned how to write by writing it. Reality, too, demands that any person in his reporting deal with his own material from his own area.

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(8) The use of a morgue or files is part of reporting. Office procedures including the establishment of the morgue are not.

(9) Ever to make the intricacies of any bureaucratic machine "crystal clear" is obviously impossible. A "crystal clear" explanation of requirements procedures would be nothing less than a fabrication; it would not prepare the student for the complex problems to be met.

(10) A course involving the development of skills cannot effectively be run "at a fast tempo." In such a course, the material must be dished out at a pace that will not bring on indigestion. The "reporting-editing drill" could better be increased than reduced.

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